

Movie Makers

September—October, 2001

Volume 11 No. 5

Sponsors of the oldest continuing Film/video Festival in the world.

72nd Annual American International Film and Video Festival Competition Results

The judging is done! Another American International Film and Video Festival is completed. This year's festival received entries from Canada, England, Germany, and the United States.

First held in New York City in 1930, The American International Film and Video Festival is the oldest such event in the world. The American Motion Picture Society was organized to perpetuate the festival.

A special thanks goes to Cameron University's Communication Department for hosting the competition this year. The chair was Dr. Matt Jenkins.

1st place
"Passion Fruit" Jack Se-
kowski

2nd place Ten Best and Best
experimental
"F/4 A.D." Joseph Kramer

3rd place Ten Best and Best
story picture
"The School Show" David
Cockley

Ten Best
"Gift of Sight" Mark Levy

Ten Best and Best Nature
"Julian Daffodil Project"
Joyce Axelrod

Ten Best
"Pedalling a Dream" Gordon
Durich

Ten Best
"Wheels of Lightning" John
Beckman

Ten Best and Best Editing
"Poles Apart" Walter Gilmore
Sr.

Ten Best and tied for Best
Documentary
"Pink Lake" Walter Gilmore
Sr.

Ten Best and tied for Best
Documentary
"Norway—A Bit of Paradise
Roger Garretson

Ten Best
Santorini, Spectacular Greek
Island
William And Mary Ann
Leeder

Best Cinematography
"Feud for Thought" Bob
Makara

Best Club
"Sixteen" Jean Frances
UAVM

Most Creative
"Deceptive Nines" Ephraim
Horowitz

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Movie Makers

Dedicated to the interests of the Serious Motion Picture Maker.

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George W. Cushman
Founder,
1909-1996

Matt Jenkins, Editor

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From the Editor

What a tragedy. I am still in shock over the attacks in New York City and Washington D.C.

This past spring I was in New York City conducting interviews for my latest documentary regarding low-budget movie producers. I was videotaping Pat Bishow, the head of Amusement Films. He shoots campy, fun, G-rated action-adventure movies that are reminiscent of the "Batman" television series starring Adam West.

Pat and his cadre of production people were conducting call back auditions for his latest epic, "Ghouls Girls, a Go-Go." It was a fun and casual day. Pat and his colleagues provided witty and intelligent quotes for use in my production. They demonstrated a true love for production. Here were people who really wanted to produce movies no matter what. In fact my favorite quote from Pat was, "I'd draw movies if I had to." I really felt a connection with Pat. It was exciting

I knew that Pat worked somewhere down around the World Trade Center and after the attacks I was scared for him and his friends. I wanted to be sure he was ok. However, the only telephone number I had for him was

connected to a recording and message machine for ordering Amusement Films products. Frantically I sent e-mail after e-mail but I received nothing back for two days. I felt a true sense of loss.

Finally he e-mailed me back and let me know he and the others were ok. He said he was coming out of the subway when the first attack occurred. He said it began to rain paper. When the sea of people headed toward him, he knew he was in the wrong place. His Assistant producer, Evelien Kong, worked in the North Tower of the World Trade Center but she was also safe. While I am saddened to know so many innocent lives were lost, I have a small sense of relief to know that Pat is alive and safe. He is uncertain of his future right now and I hope it turns out for him and his family.

The news journalists were right. This tragedy will touch each of us directly or indirectly in some way. What a terrible thing to happen to America.

Matt Jenkins

Behind the Scenes of This Year's Competition

Matt Jenkins

WOW! The competition is over! The judges have spoken. I am relieved!

While an "expert" in entering film/video festivals this was my first venture into overseeing a competition.

At first the entries trickled in. Packages were coming from exotic locations and it was fun to see the mail box full. Then, it became a bit overwhelming. My original box that held all the entries quickly became full. Two large boxes later, I took over the dining room for storage. Then three days before the cut-off date, the entries suddenly stopped coming in.

How was I going to keep track of each entry? Some entries were to be returned by mail. Others will be returned at the convention. Some entrants sent a dollar for return postage others sent four dollars. Help! Roger Garretson was kind enough to send examples of how past judging was conducted. So I set up a spreadsheet in my grade book. I chose my grade book since it was the most important book I use as a professor.

When I accepted this assignment, I decided that I would not be a judge or enter into this year's competition. I felt to do either would not appropriate and it wouldn't look good especially if I had entered, had been a judge, and placed!

So I set about to select judges. I ended up with four judges. Each judge brought particular assets to the competition.

One judge had experience



producing low-budget documentaries.

The second judge was a skillful editor.

The third judge was a producer of a weekly local television program.

The fourth was a colleague who had a strong background in writing and in audio production.

Prior to judging, the judges were given a brief talk on the

history of the festival and the purpose of the judging form.

As indicated on the judging form, the judges were free to use the scoring indicated or to use their own method for judging.

All judges judged all entries together and all entries were judged.

As the entries came in the mail, each was assigned a number. When the judging commenced, the entries were randomly selected. Every effort was made to judge multiple entries from one person separately.

Awards were based on judges scoring and comments.

The judges were superb and spent many hours considering the entries. And while I was busy handling the entries and the viewing of entries, I did manage to watch most of them. There certainly was a variety of programs and productions in this year's competition.

So congratulations to the winners! And if you didn't win, there's always next year!

Early Judging

No 17, March 1994

George Cushman

The theory of judging non-commercial work has changed quite a bit over the years. It might be interesting to review these changes.

Probably the best way to dot his is to study the "Judges' point systems" that contest sponsors have used for some 70 years.

Though amateurs were shooting 35mm film early in this century, the amateur movement didn't really begin until 1923 when Eastman introduced 16mm film. The average guy could afford this smaller film size. Five years later the movie magazines were holding film competitions.

WITH HOLLYWOOD FILMS

And what did those early judges look for: Believe it or not they compared amateur work with professional Hollywood theater films! Not realizing there was a difference between the two.

But when amateur movie clubs started forming in the late 20's and held annual contests, they based judging essentials on their mutual problems of that period.

No. 1 on most judge's score sheets was exposure, and it was allowed up to 25 points, next was focus, also 25 points, steadiness and panning, 15 points, titling 15 points, composition 10 points and editing 10 points.

While the point spread might vary a bit from club to club, the items to be considered by the judges were much the same.

It is interesting to note that in those early days the first four items, a total of 80 points, were all on the mechanics of using a camera. Exposure and focus were thought to be the most important factors in making a film.

Twenty years later color film was available and the judges were then asked to consider color. Other than exposure consideration, they were judging the film manufacturer and the film processor.

Sound was becoming popular and it eventually replaced the use of titles.

ADDITION OF CONTINUITY

But the first major change was the addition of continuity, as filmmakers were beginning to see that continuity was extremely important.

The addition of audience appeal was used for a while until clubs began to realize that no judge can assess the appeal of any motion picture to

any specific audience.

The introduction of the electric eye lens diminished the value of considering exposure. To do so was to judge the filmer's pocket book. If he could afford such a camera his exposures would become automatic and no longer under his control.

AUTOMATIC FOCUS

The same has become true with focus now that we have cameras that focus automatically.

The use of point systems is rare in clubs today, especially the older more experienced clubs. In the Society's competition the judges have no restrictions, they may judge what they see in what they feel is the method for them. A good judge knows all films are different, and the factors that are basic in one may not even exist in another.

Good experienced judges need no point sheets. They know their job is to consider only those parts of a film over which the maker has complete control. The automatic mechanics are no longer relevant.

Editor's note: The Society's judging sheets do indicate points. However, it is stated on the sheet that judges are free not to use a point system and to use what he or she feels is appropriate for judging the entry.

Convention

The American Motion Picture Society is participating this year with the Society of Amateur Videographers and Cinematographers and the Ten Best of the West in a joint convention to be held at Jackson Hole Wyoming.

While nothing in the way of a schedule has been forwarded to "Movie Makers," the following information is certain.

The convention is being held at the Snow King Resort in Jackson Hole, Wyoming beginning on October 11th through October 14th.

Registration after September 5th is 40.00.

Scheduled activities include an awards banquet with either Idaho Stuffed Trout or Prime Rib (dinner costs extra.)

Thursday night there will be a social hour.

Friday afternoon there will be a coffee, Tea, and cookie break.

And the banquet will take place on Saturday night.

As for AMPS participation, I will be presenting a workshop/discussion on entering festivals and miscellaneous other things. AMPS will also be formally presenting the winners of the latest competition.

To register call Michael Treshow at (801) 582-0803 or e-mail to nanna-jean@aol.com.

I look forward to seeing you there.

American International Film and Video Festival Entrants

"Mad Balls"
Jeffrey Mullin

"The School Show"
David Cockley

"I Had a Dream"
"4th July, 2000 Del Mar Fair"
Denis Kirwan

"In the Name of the Law"
Oskar Siebert

"F/4 A.D."
Joseph Kramer

"Diddley Squat"
Howard Farley

"Of Gentle Minds and Gentle Meetings"
Art Nelson

"The Gift of Sight"
"High Jinks"
Mark Levy

"Temple Square"
Jean Frances

"The Prince" (Flowers in Paradise)
"Sixteen"
Jean Frances/Merna Smith

"The Voyages of Discovery"
Greg Caravan

"Santorini, Spectacular Greek Island"
William and Mary Ann Leeder

"Pompeii - By Twain"
Bernard Wood

"Passion Fruit"
Jack Sekowski

"Glow in the Night"
Norma Otto

"Krap Away"
"Trees"
Lee Prescott

"Four Seasons in a Day"
"Sail the Yucatan"
Gerald Turk

"California Images"
Stanley Whitsitt

"Of One Blood"
Nana Kwasi Scott Douglas Morrow &
Nana Hema Kousa Brenda Berg-Morrow

"Julian Daffodil Project"
"From Tree to Table: Rebirth of a Tree"
Joyce Axelrod

"Capistrano"
Don Peters

"The Deceptive Nines"
"The House on Coolidge Avenue"
Ephraim Horowitz

"The Centennial"
Stanley Smith

"Miss Twiddle"
"Press to be Depressed"
Marg Chamberlain

"Master of Glass"
"Senior Master Mariner"
Richard McCartney

"A Bad Dream"
"Is the Internet Avenue for Amateur Movie Makers"
James Beach

"On Royal Watch"
Audrey Bishop

"The Man in the Closet"
Matt Fore

"Railfanning to Model Rail Road"
David McNeill

"Pedalling a Dream"
Gordon Durich

"Wheels of Lightning"
John Beckman

"Feud for Thought"
Bob Makara

"Up, Up, and Away"
"Davis Farmer Market"
Brenda Lantow

"Beyond the Wall"
"Single Mom"
Howard Lockwood

"Getting Hitched"
"Aztec Ruins"
Ernest Smith

"The Challenge"
"Poles Apart"
"Pink Lake"
Walter Gilmore

"Norway, A Bit of Paradise"
Roger Garretson

"Journey to Paradise"
"I'd Rather Be Eating"
"Let's Eat"
Malcolm Colditz

"Back of Beyond"
"Westlake Village Art Guild"
Patricia Morgan

TECHNICAL

The Big Picture

By Jim Beach

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words.

I wonder who "they" are and if they have any justification for that claim?

Since I have been playing around with digital video I have a greater appreciation for what it takes to make a picture. I'm referring to the vast number of pixels it takes to detect or display a picture, and the humongous number of bits or bytes required to record a picture digitally.

Thinking more in human terms of what does the human eye and mind see and perceive I seem to remember that the eye has a lens an iris and a retina much like a camera and that the retina is composed of an array of rods and cones that detect light reflected from a picture and focused on them by the lens. The rods and cones in turn generate a nerve impulse in response to the qualities of that light. And in some mys-

terious way the mind upon receiving these impulses perceives a picture.

Words, of course, can be verbal or written and one thousand words describing, for instance, an every day street scene would take several minutes to read or speak. The camera or the human eye and brain can record it all in an instant.

Time is worth something but the real meaning of this phrase is that no amount of words can describe every detail of a picture, every nuance of light and color, every sense of motion, or gleam of an eye or sign of emotion on a living being.

So I think "they" got it right.

Perhaps if we think about how we would describe a scene we are about to shoot for our movie we would compose it better leaving out areas that add nothing to the purpose of the scene or detract from the scene.

Still pictures can be cropped, enlarged and in other ways improved but motion pictures can't be easily altered that way. I can think of a scene in one of my movies that bothered me because it was not

framed just right and along one edge was a distracting line from the edge of a door. It had nothing to do with the scene but getting rid of it would require touch up work on 300 frames of the ten-second scene.

I cheated by adding a black border on that edge, an easy and quick procedure with a nonlinear editing system. A little more care would have framed the scene without that distraction.

Thinking about how to describe a scene, I was remembering the name of the artist of a painting that was hanging on the wall, when I noticed an area of the picture was too bright. Studying it more closely I saw that it was a reflection from a bright object on a nearby table. Simply rotating the object eliminated the reflection before shooting the scene.

The purpose for thinking about how to describe the scene was that I was writing a script/storyboard and previewing the scene.

Mentally or by script describing a picture for a scene is a good way to appreciate what all the camera will see and

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also what it should not see and you can be sure it will see many things that you did not describe.

Many of our movies, of course are based on travel or are other wise spontaneous and the scene or picture description has to be mental. Never-the-less mentally describing the scene you are shooting will help you get the best picture. Remember, though, to make the scenes a bit longer than you think you want to leave room for editing. Also take some cut-aways to relate the scene to the big picture.

Speaking of the big picture, I recently saw a travel movie with interesting close-ups and even short bits of nice mountain climbing scenes but I had no idea where it was or how it all related until the end when the location was revealed and some great scenic views were shown.

Back to the thousand words versus a picture, a simple enough picture of course can be described in a few words. I think "they" had in mind a typical picture of a human face or a work of art or a scenic view or any of the myriad scenes of a movie or family

photographs. None of these can be completely described by words.

The picture "they" had in mind is really in the mind. It is how the mysteries of the mind perceive the image that the eye detects from the light reflected from the picture. A talented author can write a story that your mind can almost see but I expect it usually takes more than a thousand words and does not come close to revealing all.

The big picture is what the mind perceives from the picture.

Upcoming Festivals

It seems like all the festivals close at about the same time, which is sort of a shame because we need to have that impetus to do something creative. Therefore, we don't have any new ones to report to you.

We have listed the winners of the 72nd American International Film and Video Festival on the front page of this issue. On behalf of all of us, we would like to congratulate, not only the winners of the festival and the other awards that are associated with it, but congratulations to all of the entrants. We owe you a big vote of thanks for your interest in this fascinating hobby we call videography.

For those of you who didn't win, there is always next year. It will be interesting to see how the other contests that will be collectively shown at Jackson Hole, WY fare vs our contest. The differences in judging is always interesting to observe. It is because of this difference that we are so interested in sustaining the festival. We need to have those differences to give all of a fighting chance.

AMPS Winners Reel

As is the custom, a winner's reel from this year's American International Film and Video Festival will be produced. It will contain the top three winners as well as the Ten Best and many of the individual category winners.

It is planned to have this reel completed by convention time. However as of press time, the reel hasn't been created yet.

In any event, when the reel is completed, it will be available to purchase.

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I Would like to Join the Society:

Dues USA: (includes - Movie Maker)

\$10

Dues Canada: (includes. - Movie Maker)

\$12

Dues-Foreign: (includes - Movie Maker)

\$13

Enclosed _____

NAME: _____

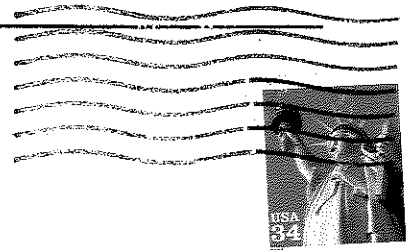
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